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RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA IMMEDIATE 0045
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T PRAGUE 000036

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STATE FOR ISN/RA JODY DANIEL AND NEA/I-PM PETER EVANS
DOE/NNSA FOR JO ANNA SELLEN
NSC FOR MARY ALICE HAYWARD AND MATTHIAS MITMAN
BAGHDAD FOR TODD SCHWARTZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/21/2018

TAGS: PARM PREL ECON ENRG EZ

SUBJECT: CZECH REPUBLIC DECLINES REQUEST FOR TEMPORARY
STORAGE OF IRAQI URANIUM

REF: A. 07 PRAGUE 1291
¶B. 07 STATE 165046

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Mike Dodman for
Reasons 1.4 B&D

¶11. (S) Econoff met with Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs Head of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Unit Pavel Klucky January 22 for response to the December 11 demarche requesting temporary storage of Iraqi uranium in the Czech Republic (Refs A & B). Despite wide inter-agency support for this non-proliferation project, the Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs has rejected the request for political reasons. On the margins of a private meeting with the Ambassador January 23, Schwarzenberg stood by his decision, explaining that it would be political suicide for the Green Party and thus for the current coalition government to take on this project.

(COMMENT: Schwarzenberg is an independent but the Green Party nominated him for the office. His political calculation is based on the fact that the Green Party is under attack from much of its grassroots for continued participation in the center-right government, most importantly for their willingness to consider the U.S. proposal for a missile defense radar in the Czech Republic, and for not protesting more actively the government's consideration of increasing reliance on nuclear-generated power. Schwarzenberg has proven repeatedly to be a reliable honest broker on such questions, and post finds his analysis credible. Since the Ambassador has already raised this directly with the Foreign Minister, we consider the Czech reply as final. END COMMENT.)

¶12. (S) Klucky had initially believed the technical requirements would be the most difficult part of the request. However, he found out that it would be relatively easy with existing infrastructure to accomplish via a simple commercial contract. He even discovered that there was precedence for this kind of a project in the Czech Republic involving another country (NOTE: he did not specify which country. END NOTE). Klucky lamented the Foreign Minister's decision because he believes this is a missed opportunity for non-proliferation, and advised that going through the IAEA may be the next best solution. He believes that the IAEA approaching a group of plausible countries may be more effective than the USG approaching one country at a time. Despite this advice, Klucky admitted that the same request to the Czech Republic from the IAEA would not likely change the Foreign Minister's decision. Klucky expressed interest in knowing how the USG plans to proceed.

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